



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	II	Intake, Investigation and Response	
Chapter:	A	Screening	4-1-2013
Subchapter:	5	After-Hours	
Issuance:	200	<b>SCR Screener After Hours Responsibilities</b>	

### Overview 2-21-2012

The SCR Screener's job is to assess each referred situation in terms of:

- child safety,
- appropriateness for CP&P/DCF intervention/services,
- risk to the child and the immediacy of that risk,
- the service need of the child and family, and
- the degree to which the given situation may be affected by the given hour of the day, or day of the week.

The Screener determines whether:

- Division services are needed beyond preliminary screening or the provision of information or information and referral by SCR,
- the type of service which may be needed,
- the urgency/timing of the delivery of CP&P services, and
- the identity of who in the Division is to deliver services (SPRU, LO, or IAIU day staff, or other).

SCR Screeners assign calls to SPRU when:

- agency intervention and/or service provision beyond initial screening efforts is warranted before the start of the next work day,

- parental consent ("informed consent") is required for medical care and treatment of a child in placement through CP&P which cannot be adequately addressed by SCR or day staff,
- extensive screening activities are necessary (collateral phone contacts, call backs, Supervisor consultation, etc.) to determine the potential risk factors involved in the presenting situation,
- immediate field intervention/investigation is needed to assure the safety of a child, in accordance with the Division's general policies and procedures, and SPRU case practice procedures,
- institutional abuse/neglect is reported -- including resource home abuse -- which must be handled/cannot wait until the next work day. The SPRU Worker conferences the report with the IAIU After-Hours Supervisor before proceeding,
- concerns are raised by resource parents, other substitute care providers, or others about the health, welfare, care, maintenance, and placement/replacement of children in out-of-home placement.

See [CP&P-II-C-1-100](#), Case Assignment to Field Office Vs. SPRU.

Other non-emergency and/or no risk situations are handled over the telephone by the SCR Screener upon the provision of Information Only, Information and Referral (I & R), or documenting Related Information (RI) on cases in active status.

The respective SPRU Supervisor may be called by SCR if consultation, direction, or input from the office/county of jurisdiction is needed to fully screen or process a report or a referral.

**The SPRU Worker or Supervisor consults day staff about a case in active/open status.**

## **Documenting Information from the Reporter                      2-21-2012**

While gathering information from the reporter the SCR Screener:

- Provides general information to the caller about CP&P, the services it provides, the After-Hours Response System, the location of the client family's Local Office, etc.
- Obtains a detailed account of the alleged incident (what happened, when, who was involved, the identity of any witnesses, etc.) or request for service, including information about family interrelationships and interactions.

- Documents client family identifying information, including family member names, children's birth dates or ages, home address(es), home telephone number, etc.
- Documents the child's location at present, and where and with whom the child lives.
- Identifies the alleged perpetrator(s) in child protective services situations, and determines the present whereabouts of the perpetrator, whenever possible.
- Obtains the reporter's name, title, agency if applicable, address, telephone number, and how he or she may be contacted, if necessary, by SCR, SPRU, or day staff:
  - If the reporter withholds his or her name, the Screener encourages him or her to identify him/herself, should the Division need to contact him or her for further information or assistance. If the reporter wishes to remain anonymous, however, the SCR Screener gives him or her the Local Office telephone number for follow up.
  - If the reporter gives his or her name, the Screener assures the reporter that CP&P is mandated, by law, to keep his or her identity confidential.
- Explains to the reporter that, despite CP&P efforts to maintain the confidential nature of his or her call, the client family may be able to determine, through its own volition and deductive reasoning, who initiated the call to SCR/CP&P.
- Engages in conversation with the reporter to gain a "sense" of the individual, including:
  - His or her reason for calling CP&P after hours,
  - The clarity of his or her thinking, and
  - The extent of his or her knowledge of the situation being reported.
- Elicits the reporter's aid and assistance, or documents his or her willingness to work with SPRU, if appropriate.
- Advises whether SPRU or CP&P/IAIU day staff will conduct an investigation or intervention or take any other action.

- Advises the reporter to contact the respective Local Office during regular business hours (in non-emergency situations) or refers the reporter or child/family to another community service provider, helpline, or agency, as appropriate (i.e., handles the call as an I&R).
- Thanks the reporter for his or her concern for the welfare of New Jersey's children and families by contacting SCR/CP&P, if applicable.

### **Mandated Screening Question 2-21-2012**

Upon documenting an Intake, the SCR Screener is required to ask each caller/reporter the following question: Are you aware of anyone in the home having a history of:

- a) Current or prior CP&P intervention;
- b) Domestic violence;
- c) Mental illness;
- d) Criminal arrests and/or convictions;
- e) Substance use disorder;
- f) Sexual Exploitation or Forced Labor ("Are you aware of any instances of prostitution, pornography or forced labor regarding the person you are calling about?")

The Screener documents information gathered - i.e., the answer to each component of the question - in the Screening Summary, printable as DCF Form [1-1](#), and advises the SPRU Worker upon case assignment.

### **Consent 2-6-2006**

### **Medical Consent 2-21-2012**

#### **SCR staff cannot provide medical consent.**

If appropriate, SCR staff contact the on-call DCF Pediatrician to advise him or her of the situation.

SCR staff may contact the Local Office (assigned Worker, Supervisor, Casework Supervisor or Local Office Manager) to advise them of the situation. Local Office staff may provide consent for treatment, when appropriate, if CP&P is authorized to give consent in the presenting situation.

If medical consent/consent to treatment is anticipated by day staff, the assigned Worker or Supervisor notifies SCR in advance, by leaving Special Instructions. See [CP&P-II-A-5-300](#), Use of Special Instructions (Linking Case Planning to After-Hours Response).

An assignment to SPRU may be warranted in situations in which consent to non-routine medical treatment by CP&P or a parent/guardian may be necessary, or the SCR Screener has concerns regarding how a child was injured.

See [CP&P-II-D-2-200](#), DCF Office of Child Health Services Doctors, regarding when to consult the Division's on-call Medical/Pediatric Consultant.

## **Consent to Visitation      8-9-96**

Arranging for, and effectuating, visitation between children in out-of-home placement and their families during weekends, evenings and/or holidays is the responsibility of assigned Workers and their Supervisors (i.e., CP&P day staff). Such arrangements are generally specified in a formal visitation plan or case plan between CP&P and the birth parent(s) and may require supervision. Visits may also be court ordered. Day staff may give Special Instructions to SCR about a planned visit, or how to handle a crisis during a scheduled home visit (see [CP&P-II-A-5-300](#), Use of Special Instructions (Linking Case Planning to After-Hours Response)).

SCR Screeners and/or SPRU staff may not consent to a visit or arrange visitation after hours for a child in substitute care based on client input and/or NJS input alone: Consultation, guidance, or a pre-set plan must be obtained from, or provided by, the Local Office of supervision (i.e., input is needed from the assigned Worker, his or her Supervisor, or local management staff through Special Instructions, telephone contact, etc.).

If an assigned Worker and/or Supervisor have reason to believe that a child in out-of-home placement will need inpatient hospital care, particularly during the course of a weekend, and that questions about visitation may ensue, the Worker or Supervisor should:

- leave instructions with facility staff specifying who can visit the child (e.g., request information be put in the child's chart, advise the hospital social work staff or nursing staff on the floor, etc.); and
- notify SCR, by leaving Special Instructions, indicating who may and who may not visit the child, when visits should take place, whether hospital staff or another individual should be present during visits, possible case developments which may warrant SPRU intervention, etc.

When SCR receives a request for visitation after hours in the absence of instructions, the SCR Screener attempts to contact the Assigned Worker or Supervisor by telephone. If they are not available, the Screener either:

- Denies the request and refers the caller back to the Local Office the next work day; or, if the situation is of a critical or sensitive nature,
- Assigns the request for a visit directly to SPRU for further inquiry.

Example:

A foster child is in the hospital, injured or ill. The birth parent, hospital social worker, or others request that a parent-child visit be permitted under this unusual circumstance, particularly if the child's condition is critical.

### **Computer Look Ups      2-21-2012**

The SCR Screener consults NJS and other available computerized data bases during each case screening. See [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#), Searching in NJS, and Other Electronic Databases. A record search is conducted, whether or not the matter is assigned to SPRU or to the Local Office for follow up/assessment.

The purpose of the record search is to determine whether the case is active, and to provide the After-Hours Response System with an overview of the reasons for, and findings of, any past CP&P involvement, to provide a framework for the investigation/intervention/follow up.

The search includes a search by home address, if given.

### **Determine Status of Resource Home through NJ SPIRIT 4-1-2013**

The availability and suitability of a CP&P resource home for use by SPRU can change, often with little notice, based on factors including, but not limited to, child abuse/neglect allegations Substantiated or Established by the Department's Institutional Abuse/Neglect Investigation Unit (IAIU) against the provider. Although most county SPRU operations provide SPRU staff with a list of emergency resource homes, these lists tend to be updated only periodically, and, therefore, may easily become inaccurate and outdated. NJ SPIRIT, however, provides current information on agency resource homes statewide.

Therefore, as a precaution against placing a child at risk in a suspended or closed home, before placing a child in a CP&P resource home after hours, SPRU Workers are required to contact SCR and request an NJS check on the provider, to ensure that the home is currently active, available, and in "APPROVED" status. SCR Screeners, in turn, access NJS and provide SPRU with the requested information.

Information retrievable through NJS includes, but is not limited to:

- The current status of the resource home, whether it is licensed, and the reason for that status;
- The capacity of the home, and whether there are openings for additional children (i.e., opportunity for emergency after hour placement);
- Characteristics of children considered for placement in the home (e.g., resource parents accept children of a certain age range only, are/are not willing to accept a child who is developmentally delayed, medically handicapped, physically abused, etc.);
- Provider's name, address, telephone contact number, and a list of persons residing in the home;
- A list of foster children currently in the home, including the child's name and birth date, the case identification number, and the Local Office of supervision.

### **Hot Line Screener Procedures 2-21-2012**

SCR Screeners are responsible for handling calls to the SCR hotline in accordance with [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#), State Central Registry (SCR) - Centralized Screening. Screeners have additional responsibilities upon handling calls after hours, including, but not limited to:

- Determining whether a matter is appropriate for SPRU/after-hours response or is best held for day staff intervention. See [CP&P-II-C-1-100](#), Case Assignment to Field Office Vs. SPRU.
- Contacting SPRU Workers to assign reports or referrals for response/intervention, or to provide call-back information/updates. Note: When making an assignment for response, the SCR Screener is required to read the report/referral (Screening Summary, DCF Form [1-1](#)) to the SPRU Worker. The Screener can transmit the report/referral to the SPRU Worker via NJS after having read it to the assigned SPRU Worker. The Screener or assigning Supervisor transmits the report to the Local Office immediately upon completing it. The SPRU Worker can retrieve the report/referral at the Local Office, when he or she is able to do so.
- Documenting the names of SPRU Workers, SPRU Supervisors, IAIU After-Hours Supervisor, other DCF/CP&P staff, or Public Defender Investigators contacted or consulted.
- Consulting NJS to screen resource homes, upon the request of SPRU.

- Transmitting - via NJ SPIRIT - Screening Summaries, DCF Form [1-1](#), to CP&P or IAIU offices immediately upon completing the report, before the start of the next work day, for follow up by day staff, as appropriate.

The Screener provides the anonymous caller the Local Office or IAIU Regional Office telephone contact number for follow up.

### **Safe Haven Infant Hotline Operated by SCR 4-5-2010**

See [CP&P-IV-C-5-100](#), Safe Haven Infants, for policies and procedures to follow regarding the Safe Haven Infant Hotline and responding to referrals regarding Safe Haven infants.

### **Reporting Abuse/Neglect to the Public Defender Instead of SPRU After Hours 7-31-2008**

SCR contacts an on-call representative of the Public Defender Conflict Investigation Unit (PDCIU) after hours, upon receipt of an allegation of child abuse/neglect or a Child Welfare Service referral/request regarding a DCF employee or an employee's relative. See CP&P policy, [CP&P-II-C-1-300](#), Limiting Conflicts of Interest.

The PDCIU may request SCR assign SPRU staff, not personally or professionally associated with the reporter or DCF employee/relative, to:

- Start to investigate the complaint, under the PDCIU's supervision;
- Assure child safety;
- Assist a PDCIU Investigator to remove a child; secure a health/medical assessment/examination or treatment for a child; or to provide other emergency services/resource referral.

SCR maintains a current listing of on-call PDCIU Investigators.

### **SCR Reports Transmitted to CP&P Offices 2-21-2012**

SCR documents each call in NJS. Each CPS report and each CWS referral documented by SCR Screeners after hours is available at the respective CP&P or IAIU office 9 a.m. the next business day, for follow up, as necessary.

See [CP&P-II-A-1-100](#), State Central Registry (SCR).